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SUNSET—COLORED ETCHING  
By Eugene Delâtre



# BRUSH AND PENCIL

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## LEONARD OCHTMAN, LANDSCAPE-PAINTER

Alien by birth, but American in interests and sympathies, Leonard Ochtman is to-day one of the best exponents of landscape-paintings in this country. He is one of the few artists we have who is broad enough in his views, tender enough in his feeling, divining enough in his interpretative sense, to take the scenes nearest at hand, however tame and commonplace they may be, and invest them with poetic charm; who can safely reject many of the stock elements of the beautiful and the picturesque which less gifted painters deem essential to pleasing pictures, and yet produce canvases that fascinate and hold one captive where more pretentious efforts pall; and who withal can afford to reject tricks of technique, mannerism, mere personal cleverness, and rely solely upon straightforward methods and truthful rendering. He has been termed the "prince of American landscape-painters," and the "Keats of landscape," and the sterling, heartfelt quality of his work merits the titles that have been given him.



LEONARD OCHTMAN  
By Floyd W. Triggs

Ochtman has been classed with the followers of Inness—but what successful artist has not been dubbed the disciple of a gifted predecessor? His canvases do offer suggestions of Inness, but those suggestions are not a matter of imitation. Inness was a lover and a close student of nature, and so is Ochtman. The dead painter and the living have both drawn their inspiration from the same source, and it is not strange that both should betray the same mother and nurse.

No man is a poet who lacks the fire that transforms mere verse into poetry, and no man is a painter, however skillful he may become with the brush, who lacks the fire necessary to make of a canvas a poem of color. Inness had that true poetic power, and so has Ochtman. Closeness to nature is the keynote of both. The living paints, as the dead painted, his rivers, his skies, his sunsets and twilights, his midday atmosphere, his luminous sunrises and glowing sunsets, his tranquil nights, with fidelity to the facts of the world, and



NEW ENGLAND LANDSCAPE  
By Leonard Ochtman

whatever be the theme, throws over it a rich fancy that makes it winsome.

"Mr. Ochtman," says a competent critic in commenting on one of his pictures, "Moonlight on the Sound," "starts with no poetic fancy, but with all a poet's quick receptivity to the most intimate qualities of the scene; he studies them with infinite patience, and his record is true, with the consequence that the very faithfulness to what he sees secures its subtle spiritual qualities, and so the picture is delightfully poetic in sentiment. It captivates one immediately, and further study of the profoundly minute analysis and of the mastery of synthesis—that is to say, of knowing just what to choose and just

how to arrange it—makes captive of the intelligence as well as of the emotions.

"There is no need," the writer continues, "as the schoolboy said of the lesser prophets, 'to draw distinctions between these holy men'; yet one may note that Mr. Ochtman's work seems to represent more nearly the modern conception of landscape in its union of realism and impressionism—words which are used in many senses, but here in the sense of having a clear, well-rounded, single-minded idea of how



THE MOONLIT ROAD  
By Leonard Ochtman

the scene affects one, and then of realizing it by the closest attention to the natural appearances, especially to the action of light upon the various color masses."

These words, spoken of a single picture, are equally applicable to all of Ochtman's later work. It should be noted, by the way, that there is a marked difference between the artist's recent canvases and his earlier efforts. His first pictures showed a lack of imagination. They betrayed, not merely a novice with the brush, but a man who had not sufficiently lived with and absorbed his themes to invest his canvases with the witchery that is never absent from nature's homeliest landscape. His mature work, however, is replete with grace, elegance, and sentiment.

This evolution, as regards his finished paintings, finds its explanation in the artist's education, and his subsequent change in habits and surroundings. He was born at Zonnemaire, Zeeland, Holland, October 21, 1854, and immigrating to this country, settled with his family at Albany, New York, in 1866. His first introduction to art was as a draftsman in an engraving office. This purely mechanical occupation doubtless had its beneficial influence in imparting sureness of touch and deftness of stroke, but it was a form of work that little satisfied the ambition of young Ochtman, who wished to devote himself to creative efforts, and whose predilections turned him toward landscape.

He therefore devoted his leisure time to the study of nature and to painting.



IN THE WOODS  
By Leonard Ochtman

He opened, and for two years maintained, a studio at Albany, but even during this time mechanical drawing was his vocation, and painting was his avocation. The methods of the draftsman thus became apparent in his first canvases, and it was only after he had abandoned his occu-

pation as an engraver that we find greater freedom in his brush-work, and a livelier imagination in his paintings.

A winter course at the Art Students' League, New York, was practically the extent of his art education. His specialty, landscape, was entirely self-taught. Naturally for a time he groped in uncertainty, but gradually he felt his way with more and more assurance. Ochtman, if any American artist, can claim the distinction of being self-made.

Ochtman first exhibited at the National Academy of Design in 1882, and since that time has been a constant exhibitor at the National Academy of Design, at the Society of American Artists, at the American Water Color Society, and at other institutions and associations. At the outset his work attracted attention, and he has since fulfilled the promise then made of him, that he was an artist of whom America had much to expect.



**NIGHT ON THE MIANUS RIVER**  
By Leonard Ochman  
Collection of Marcus Stine, New York



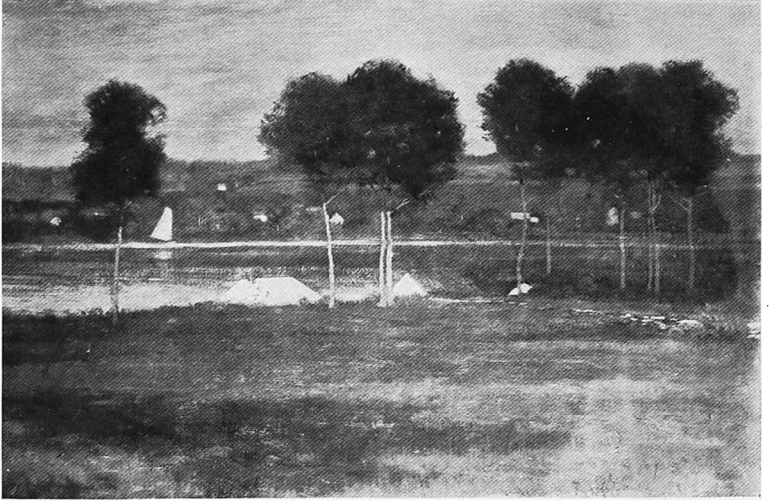
Selecting Mianus, Connecticut, a short run from New York, as his home, he opened a studio in the metropolis, and settled down to earnest work, under the conviction that industry was one of the largest elements of success. \* From that time to this, he has been an indefatigable worker, sketching in the vicinity of his village home and elaborating his sketches into finished paintings in his New York studio. Many of his best known and most popular pictures depict scenes in or about Mianus or along the Mianus River. He early learned the lesson that so many artists find it difficult to master, that a painter can interpret most sympathetically, and render most truthfully and forcefully, those scenes with which he is most familiar.

Consequently, he has never been lured to wander far from home for his subjects. In 1885, it is true, he traveled in England, France, and Holland, but this was rather a sight-seeing trip than a sojourn designed to bring upon his art the influences of Old-World masters. Indeed, for one who has attained so large a measure of success, Ochtman's life has been somewhat narrowly circumscribed, but this centering of attention on country, and especially upon home, is probably responsible for many of the best qualities of his work.

There is nothing of the dramatic or the tragic in his nature, and in his paintings one finds an absence of the intenser or more striking moods of nature, but he is keenly alike to the least variation of nature's gentler moods. "He knows and paints from his heart," says one of his critics, "the breath of autumn on the rolling New England landscape, with a farm-house nestling against every hill-side; or the dull blue shield of Long Island Sound, with a freshening breeze ruffling it into brown and green, white clouds streaking the pale azure sky, and a low range of violet hills dimly bounding the horizon; or a winter afternoon near a frozen pond, where the heavens and the trees and the houses scattered among them all lend color; or a golden corn-field; or a moonlight night with a cherry glow from human habitations contrasting with the pearly radiance outside; or a summer day on a river wide enough for a sail-boat to suggest human pleasure thereon. The sail-boats, the hay-wagons, the snake-fences, the sharp angular wooden houses, painted red or white, seem to compose as satisfactorily into his landscape as do thatched cottages and windmills into those of his foreign brethren."

In a word, he is the exponent of home—a home that he knows intimately and deeply loves. There are painters who can see beauty in the far away and little in the near at hand. With these Ochtman has little in common. Like many an artist of wider celebrity, he can find material for a lifetime of work within a stone's throw of his village home; and it is to him a supreme delight to transfer copse and meadow-land, roadside and river-bed, to his canvases, and cast over them the spell of his own thought and feeling.

He sees broadly and paints as simply and sympathetically. Many



ALONG THE MIANUS RIVER

By Leonard Ochtman

Collection of Arthur J. Eddy, Chicago

a landscape is a mere aggregation of facts. Ochtman's pictures are always something more. They are instinct with thought and feeling. They are expressions of a mind that habitually seeks the quiet beauty of commonplace scenes and endeavors to make that beauty manifest in pictorial guise. To a mind of this order the sterner aspects of life and nature are not inviting. It is the quiet, the peaceful, that woos.

Mountains, suggestive of convulsions, storm scenes full of force and energy, the deep with its mystery and terror, and similar subjects have small attraction for Ochtman. On the contrary, the scenes he loves to depict are essentially idyllic, often mere little bits of nature without a suggestion of human life—a stretch of river, for instance, whose water has little more than cloud forms to mirror; or the glow of a sunset that has nothing more to tell—and surely that is sufficient—than the story of a day dying in glory; or a sunrise streaking the east with the promise of midday effulgence, with no wight but the spectator to read the prophecy; or a moon keeping its silent watch over a clump of trees and a stretch of meadow.

To the vulgar this class of picture may seem lacking in interest, but to the thoughtful it has a peculiar charm. It is for the thoughtful, the people of sentiment, the people who do not want an obtrusive cow in the foreground, or a smoke wreath from a cunningly hidden chimney in the background, or clod-hoppers, picnickers, stage-coaches,

or other et ceteras thrown in by way of animation, that Ochtman paints.

Ochtman's pictures are not of the class that lend themselves as striking book illustrations. Their composition is too simple, their beauty is too elusive, they lack the distinctive features that show to advantage on the printed page. The half-tone used in modern printing is an absolute register of form and of masses of light and shade, but with all the perfection to which it has been brought, it cannot record the subtle beauty of tone which constitutes the charm of such paintings as those of Ochtman, or convey the poetic thought which a master of the brush works in with his colors. A black-and-white reproduction, therefore, however excellent, too often fails to give the slightest hint of the qualities of an artist's work. It is emphatically so in the case of Ochtman, who deliberately eschews the striking, and by preference depicts the simplest and most unpretentious scenes. Verbal description is equally ineffective, yet as a suggestion to the reader, one may hazard a reference to a few of his notable canvases.

His "Night on the Mianus River," which won for him a prize at the World's Fair, is simple to a fault, but is still a picture which holds the spectator in a sense spellbound. The mist from the river mingles with the sheen of the moonlight and bathes the scene with an indistinct silvery glow suggestive of the mystery which we are wont



WINTER MORNING

By Leonard Ochtman

Collection of Dr. George Woodward, Philadelphia

to associate with night. And so with his "The Light of Night," "An Autumn Moonlight," and his other night scenes. They are all suffused with the same subtle charm. In his "Moonlight Night in Spring," the silver orb of night is somewhere up in the clouds beyond the confines of the picture, but its soft radiance falls on the white blossoms of the fruit trees and the white walls of a near-by house, giving the scene an air at once elf-like and pleasing.

His day scenes are no less effective, no less instinct with the spirit of day than his night scenes are with that of night. "Among the Hills" reminds one of France. A row of poplars forms a screen in the half-distance protecting a white cottage from the northern winds. Like most of his pictures, it is free from the affectation of the picturesque, and presents just such a scene as we have all beheld and admired. "View from Great Hill," a stretch of undulating country with a winding, sun-flecked road and an expanse of blue sea stretching away to the horizon, is another delightful landscape.

"The Enchanted Vale" is a typical Ochtman canvas without a vestige of human life. It is a scene painted in the reds and yellows of early autumn, and cannot fail to recall to the beholder's mind the thought of Indian summer. A blue river glides peacefully on in the sunlight with naught to ruffle its placid surface. In "The Golden Hour," the scene is varied, but no less pleasing. The golden hour is the harvest hour, a half-cut wheat-field tinged with the ruddy after-glow of the setting sun conveying the poetic thought of the painter.

One finds the same qualities in "In the Mountains," "View from Woodwild," "Seaside Farm," "Buds and Blossoms," and many another canvas which Ochtman has exhibited and by which he has won for himself enthusiastic admirers. If they could be translated into words as expressive as are the artist's pigments, they would all have the simple rhythm, the grace and beauty of lyrics. Their tonal measures can no more be disturbed without detriment to the finished works than the poet's rhymes and measures can be changed without impairment of poetic diction.

This is not fulsome praise, but a just recognition of attainments. Ochtman works honestly and earnestly within the latitude of his observation, never venturing on unknown territory, but seeking to divine the hidden meaning of that which is near at hand, and then undertaking, by the simplest and most natural means, to convey to the world, through the medium of his colors, what he has read of nature in the lights and shadows, the barren stretches and the budding leafage, which those less earnest and studious, less poetic and reverential, are apt to slight or ignore. He has approached nature like an Inness, but he has depicted her like an Ochtman, and he should be commended for the fact that he has foresworn the tragic, the theatrical, the adventitious, the merely decorative, and given the world masterpieces of straightforward, simple, appreciative rendering.

FREDERICK W. MORTON.